THE PORT FOLIO,

(NEW SERIES)

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, ESQ.

Various, that the mind of desultory man, studious of change and pleased with novelty, may be indulged—Cowp.

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ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For The Port Folio.

TRAVELS.

LETTERS FROM GENEVA AND FRANCE.

Written during a residence of between two and three years in different parts of those countries, and addressed to a lady in Virginia.

(*Continued from vol. V, page* 406.)

LETTER XXVII.

My dear E——,

IT is now time that I should say something to you of the history of Geneva, which I will do, depend upon it, in as few words as possible, passing rapidly from the time of Cæsar to the last revolution; and rather pointing out to you the particular subjects and periods upon which you ought to seek for information if you are so disposed, which I confess to you however, that I hardly believe you will be, than attempting to convey it.

Cæsar desirous of stopping the Helvetii from leaving their country, hastened to Geneva, then a town of some importance, but as the theatre of the war was speedily removed to a very distant quarter, he says nothing of a place which it would have been so agreeable to us to have had a description of from such a hand: this being the case, you must be satisfied to take a step of nearly five hundred years, when Geneva, which had shared in all the calamities, that assailed the declining age of the Roman empire, became the capital of the Burgundians, and the residence of the great king Gondebaud, who erected walls, which are yet to be traced; built himself a palace, which thirteen hundred years have not destroyed all remains of; and published a code of laws.

It was from Geneva that his niece set out in an ox cart, the genteel equipage of those days, to join her husband Clovis, the founder of the French monarchy, whom she had the glory and satisfaction of converting to the Christian faith; he could not however, (this great

conquerour, who, with all his abilities and knowledge of war, was a selfish, treacherous and cruel tyrant) have made much progress in the mysteries of the faith he embraced, when he declared, that if he had been at Jerusalem with his valiant Franks, our Saviour should not have been put to death.

In process of time Geneva became annexed to the German empire, and acquired the privileges of an Imperial city, and the bishop who had been originally entrusted by the emperour with the administration of the government, was gradually converted into a sovereign, owing however, his election to the people in conjunction with the Chapter of St. Peter, and depending upon the general sense of his good conduct for the preservation of his power; by a convention in the year eleven hundred and twenty-four, the bishop was left in possession of the essential rights of sovereignty, whilst the count of the neighbouring county of Genevois, who had originally been an officer of the empire, and had been appointed to administer justice at Geneva, in the name of the emperour, with whom the bishop had been in a long continued state of warfare and disputes (similar to those which for so many years distracted Italy between the Papal and Imperial power) retained a portion of the executive authority in the person of his representative the Vidomne. The indiscretion of a succeeding count, who divided his territories by will, and the resentment of one of the coheirs, who had taken shelter in a distant country, first brought the house of Savoy in contact with Geneva, and the people having unfortunately invoked the interference of a count of Savoy on the occasion of some internal disagreement, that enterprising family were never afterwards without a pretext for vindicating their just claim, as they presumed to call it, in a share in the administration: at one period the rival counts of Genevois and of Savoy appear to have divided the affections of the people, and to have made war upon each other in the town itself; toward the end of the fourteenth century however, I find Geneva in a state of perfect tranquillity: the counts of Genevois had become extinct and those of Savoy had renounced all pretensions to anything more than the powers of the Vidomne, whilst the bishop being chosen by the people and the chapter, was in several instances an enlightened and benevolent sovereign: one of them fortified the town according to the rules of art in those days, and another, a Genevois by birth, of the respectable family of the Fabri, which is still in existence, gave good laws and a constitution to the state; the bishop and the clergy on the one side, and the magistrates, as representing the people on the other, divided the rights of sovereignty between them in the manner that the sun and moon are made to rule in the first book of Genesis—the bishop ruling by day, and the people by night.

The passage of the pope through Geneva in fourteen hundred and nineteen, was an unfortunate circumstance: it happened to be at the period of an election to the bishoprick, and his holiness, as if recollecting a branch of his prerogative, which had been hitherto overlooked, assumed the right of appointing upon the present instance, and secured the right of election on all future occasions to the chapter, exclusively of the people; a subsequent regulation made it necessary that the canons should be noble,

and it was ever afterwards by no means difficult for the house of Savoy now become Ducal, and in possession by inheritance or purchase of the whole county of Genevois, to influence the election, which they so managed as to render the bishoprick little better than an appendage to their family. In fourteen hundred and forty four, duke Amadeus, known in history by the name of Pope Felix the 5th, the same whose life at Ripaille became proverbial, and who had the good sense to sacrifice an empty title to the repose of mankind, administered the See of Geneva, though not, I believe with the title of bishop; he confirmed the privileges of the people, and conducted himself in every respect with all that moderation, which marked his publick character: but the bishoprick was upon succeeding elections, or as they might more properly perhaps be termed appointments, very unworthily filled, and not unfrequently by minors, or dissipated young men. The contests which ensued between the duke or the bishop, and the people, and which cost the lives of several distinguished individuals of merit, prepared the minds of men in some measure for the important change which shortly after took place at the reformation: this great event was promoted by a variety of causes, but principally by the ignorance and immorality of the clergy, by that connexion which invariably exists between civil and religious liberty, by the powerful influence of Berne, and by the personal character of the celebrated Calvin. The learning of this distinguished reformer, for such it was in that age, was prodigious, but his learning and his fervent piety, were contrasted with the utmost bigotry and intolerance, and as he laboured under a complication of disorders, he very naturally considered this world as a mere state of trial, and confounded the liberal amusements of life with the works of the devil. He was fierce, presumptuous, irascible and unforgiving, but sincere and constant in his affections, for he had affections, and was even married: zealous in the great work to which he thought himself called to by Providence, simple and unaffected in private life, and strictly disinterested.

It is difficult to conceive how one head and one hand could have been equal to all he performed, to the numerous sermons, dissertations, commentaries and letters which he wrote and published. The execution of Servel, the circumstance of all others the most inexcusable in his conduct, might have been so obscured in such a mind by religious fanaticism, as to be deemed by himself a meritorious action, and we ought no more to appreciate the merit of those who have lived and acted in former times, according to the opinions and prejudices of succeeding ages, than we ought to try a man for actions committed in one country, by the laws and usages of another. It is probable, says Montesquieu, that if we had lived in the time of Caligula, and known all the circumstances of the case, we might not have thought it so extraordinary that he appointed his favourite horse to the honours of the consulship.

It was on the fourteenth of July, fifteen hundred and thirty-five, that the Protestant faith was established by law in Geneva, to the great satisfaction of the people, with the exception of about fifty families, who quitted the city; the far greater part of the clergy also remained attached to the ancient faith, as did the nuns of St. Claire,

who heroically resisted the offers held out to them, and moved off in a body to a distant convent in Savoy; one of these good ladies has left an account of her departure from Geneva in company with the sisterhood, of all they saw upon the road, and of the events that marked, what may be called, their first appearance in the world. I have seen this, and found it extremely interesting, notwitstanding some absurd miracles, that it relates, and a violent and bitter sentiment of enmity, which it breathes throughout against the enemies of the Roman church.

It was thought proper by the magistrates, that one of the most popular of the new preachers should give a proof of his eloquence at the convent, that he should represent to the nuns, who were, much against their will, assembled for that purpose, the superiour advantages of those proper enjoyments which awaited them in the world, over the useless mortifications to which they had condemned themselves: but the pious maidens heard him with impatience, and dismissed him with contempt; they preferred the cause of truth, accompanied as it was with danger and with poverty, to all the allurements of the world, and having assembled in the cemetery and poured out their hearts in a last and solemn farewell to the departed sisters, they followed their superiour, each with a little bundle and a prayer book under her arm, and were conveyed by a guard as far as the frontiers.

"The world was all before them where to choose
"Their place of rest, and Providence their guide."

The astonishment of those who had passed their lives in seclusion, and now beheld the common objects of the world for the first time, must have been amusing to such as were better informed; many of them are said to have mistaken the cattle and sheep, which were wandering over the fields, for wolves and other wild beasts that they had read of.

Exhausted as the city was by continued exertions in defence of their independence and of their very existence, it was necessary to inculcate the most rigid economy, and to enforce it by sumptuary laws; of these you may form a very just idea by looking into Keate's account of Geneva: there is something ludicrous, perhaps, at first sight in making the sort of lining, which a gentleman may have to his coat, or the size of a lady's hoop, or the duration of a ball, or the number of guests at a wedding supper, the objects of legislative interference; but you must consider that independent of that general economy, which was the first object of such laws, it was essential to prevent that degree of envy, which might have been excited by a difference of living or appearance, where the whole nation was brought together in so small a space, and where union and good order, and somewhat of republican simplicity were so necessary to their preservation.

The morals of the people were placed under the protection of an ecclesiastical court, called the consistory, who took cognizance of all improprieties, and inflicted penalties in proportion to the offence, and while Calvin himself presided at the board, you may easily conceive that the interference of such a body could not fail being troublesome, and even oppressive; there was something in their zeal for virtue, which looked too much like hatred

and revenge, it was stern and unrelenting, and the publick who compared such moroseness with the amiable defects and pleasant vices of the Romish clergy, began to regret the change which had taken place, so that the personal courage and perseverance of Calvin became as necessary in the great work of reformation, as his religious zeal and his learning; there certainly existed in those days a singular degree of libertinism in Geneva, either owing to the bad example of the inferiour clergy of the Romish church, or connected with that relaxation of principles, which seems to be the effect of all great revolutions in every country: but the peculiar object of religious indignation was the crime of dancing, which Calvin in particular could never overlook: it so happened that once in Christmas time the lady of the captain-general was tempted by the sound of a sacriligeous fiddle, and deviated from the paths of virtue into a dance in company with one of the principal magistrates of the state; three days confinement in the common gaol was the punishment inflicted upon the lady, and her relations having resented the indignity, a quarrel ensued, the government took part in it, and this miserable affair of an accidental dance at Christmas, ended in the ruin of a once powerful and distinguished family.

The government of Geneva during this period resided in four Syndicks, who were annually chosen by the people, in a council of twenty-five, who together with the Syndicks, held the executive department, and in the council of two hundred, who were supposed to represent the nation or general council, which was assembled at stated periods, or on very particular emergencies, and the members of which were satisfied to be saved the trouble of a more particular attention to the affairs of the state. Strangers who offered themselves were for a moderate price admitted as Bourgeois, and their children born within the city were entitled to all the rights of citizenship, which addition to the other privileges of Bourgeoisie enabled them to fill offices under the government; there were other distinctions arising from residence or birth within the city, and to this variety of interest, these various sorts of people residing within the same walls, and upon a different footing, the republick owed in process of time, a part of those disturbances, which frequently rendered it necessary that the neighbouring powers should interfere: there were also other sources of unhappiness.

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LETTER XXVIII.

As long as the common enemy hovered around the walls, and the independence and religion of the state were exposed to danger, the strong sense of one common interest kept all parties united, and the duke of Savoy contributed to the internal tranquillity of Geneva, as Hannibal did to that of Rome; but the event of the Escalade, which like the battle of Zama, put an end to the hopes of an inveterate foe, left the people of Geneva leisure to discuss a number of speculative points, and to examine the principles of their government, comparing what they had hitherto acquiesced in, with the rights to which they felt themselves entitled, and which they had in great measure enjoyed previously to the reformation. The civil wars of England too, which ended so fatally for

Charles the first, had roused the attention of all Europe to the inalienable rights of man; in France the flame was soon smothered, but in Geneva, where the instinct of liberty remained, and where the accession of exiled Protestants encouraged a spirit of discussion and resistance to arbitrary power—where the means of obtaining a liberal education were accessible to all, the contest very soon assumed a serious appearance, and as is but too natural, was accompanied with faults on both sides; the people had a right to require, that more than a limited number of the same family should not be members of the administration at one time; that the laws, by which alone their lives, their property and their honour could be secure, should be published, and not remain in many instances a mere matter of disputable tradition; that the judicial should be more distinct from the executive power; that the council of two hundred should not be altogether independent of those whom they were supposed to represent; that no taxes should be imposed, which the nation, convened for that purpose, had not consented to; that there should be stated, though perhaps distant periods, at which they were to be convened, for the purpose of a general supervision of the government, and that remonstrances might be presented whenever the signatures of a certain number of citizens could be procured, and the sense of the nation taken upon the grievances they referred to; these demands, many of which were extremely reasonable, though easily admitting of being carried to excess, were accompanied by others as ill advised, and seditious, and the popular party suffering their zeal in a good cause to degenerate into what had more the appearance of fanaticism, would in the event of their success on many occasions have exposed the government to all the weakness and disorderly fluctuation of democracy; unfortunately too, the harsh spirit of Calvin in matters of criminal jurisprudence, seemed still to hover over the city, and to have inspired the magistrates in the condemnation and punishments of particular individuals, who had rendered themselves obnoxious by taking the lead in opposition to the government. In succeeding years the picture exhibited by this little republick became still more afflicting; the different parties had several times recourse to arms, the blood of citizens was spilt by their fellow-citizens, and it became more than once necessary that the neighbouring powers should interfere: the calm produced upon these occasions was generally but of short duration, the long promised code was still to make its appearance, other grievances remained unredressed, the natives, such as had no claim but what arose from being born within the city, were clamorous to be admitted to the Bourgeoisie, and the ministers of the court of France, with no very liberal views, seemed to promote the internal discord of the republick, by all those means which their power and their near neighbourhood gave them. At length in the year seventeen hundred and eighty-two, the aristocracy or government party finding themselves too weak to struggle any longer against their opponents, invoked the mediation of the Swiss Cantons, of France, and of the king of Sardinia, and the consequence was, that after a useless parade of opposition, where no effectual opposition could be made, the democrats were

compelled to submit: there now succeeded seven years of peace and prosperity; the aristocrats were left in possession of the government, and though furnished with an armed force, which precluded all opposition, they administered the laws with mildness and equity, the expenses of the state were made to fall upon the rich, and no one could complain of any act of oppression; such of their former opponents as chose to return, were received with open arms, and nothing was left undone which could promote the welfare and even splendour of the state. But it is not to be expected that the citizens of such a small state, where the people had always been in the habit of reasoning upon their privileges, and discussing the rights of man, and where from the late rapid accumulation of their fortunes in the French funds, great numbers had scarcely any other employment, would long remain tranquil spectators of the important revolution, which was going on in France: to the tumults of seventeen hundred and eighty-nine, there succeeded a formal change of government, in seventeen hundred and ninety-one, of this there are various opinions, but it appears to me to have very happily combined all that was essentially useful in the particular modes, which had so long excited the attention and divided the opinions of the people, and it had certainly acquired their confidence, when in the following year the French army under Montesquieu approached their walls: the close connexion between Geneva and their powerful neighbour has existed for two centuries; they had assisted Henry IV. in his war against the duke of Savoy, and had been content, as in the union between the giant and the dwarf in Goldsmith, that whilst the king bore away by far the greater part of the honour and the profits of the union, the blows should fall on them; they certainly neither 'shared in the triumph, nor partook the gale,' the good natured monarch gave them kind words however, and their independence remained secured, though sometimes trifled with, and more than once insulted.

At length in the year ninety-two, Brissot who for the sins of mankind was placed by Providence, in some measure, at the head of the French republick, actuated, by an unnecessary and outrageous zeal for what he called, and perhaps thought liberty, determined to surround France with a chain of smaller republicks, and the minister of the French finances, an exiled Genevan, blinded by resentment against the party which had banished him in seventeen hundred and eighty-two, endeavoured that one of these should be composed of a certain portion of Savoy, with Geneva, the government of which was to be new modelled for the occasion, as the capital. The general of the French army however, feeling ashamed of the orders which had been forced upon him, and not very sanguine of success on a first attempt, delayed to carry them into execution, and the people of Geneva, laying aside all political differences rallied around their magistrates and prepared to defend the sacred inheritance of their forefathers.

"They ask'd no omen but their country's cause."

In this awful moment, the French government which had as yet some degree of reputation to preserve, acquiesced in a treaty, which they would not approve, and withdrew

their forces from the neighbourhood of the city; but flight alone could save Montesquieu from their vengeance, and the attempt on Geneva was only suspended to be shortly after renewed in a more fatal manner: France it was declared by the convention, had never held any other object in view, but a general participation of privileges and advantages among all the people of Geneva, and without wishing to intermeddle with the concerns of any government, was yet ready, at all times to stretch forth the hand of brotherly assistance to the aggrieved and oppressed of all nations. In this manner was the apple of discord thrown into the very bosom of the republick; for no sooner was it apparent, that France had laid aside all idea of force, than their promised friendly interference was looked forward to by all those who felt themselves deprived of an entire participation of privileges by the laws of the state. The natives who had not yet been admitted as Bourgeois into the sovereign council of the nation, the peasantry of the neighbourhood, and even such persons as were accidentally residents, began to clamour for equal rights, and to assume the democratick manners and bloody cap, and coarse language of the lately emancipated French; to these were joined those outcasts of mankind known by the name of Mountaineers, or Marseillois, whom Soulavie, the French minister, an apostate priest, let loose from time to time as a pack of hell-hounds kept ready for the occasion; others might contend for rights and privileges, but the object of these men was to degrade all that had been deemed respectable, to insult the great, to mollify and affright the pious, to plunder the rich, and with very little or no care of what might be established afterwards, to subvert and confound all present institutions. It had been better for the republick perhaps to have resisted the evil in its infancy, and to have incurred without fear the threatened interference of France; such violence might have awakened the Swiss from their fatal lethargy, or at the worst the citizens of Geneva, either perishing with arms in their hands, or submitting as prisoners to the fortune of war, would have bravely done their duty, and a ray of glory might have gilded the last hours of their political existence. The wiser and more prudent of the state thought differently however, the majority yielded to the minority, the government was suppressed, a temporary administration established, a convention of the people called, and after a year of fluctuating decision, a constitution was agreed to, in which, the genius of democracy had been allowed to gratify its utmost caprice.

For The Port Folio.

POLITE LITERATURE.

Nature and religion conspire in teaching us the sublime and consoling doctrine of the resurrection of the body. It was prefigured to the infant world before the flood, by the translation of Enoch: to the laws under the legal economy by the exaltation of Elijah; and it was gloriously confirmed to Christians in these latter ages, by the triumphant conquest of the great captain of our salvation, who ascended through the gates of death to immortality and life. But it is pleasant to the sincere believer, to find the doctrines on which he leans for hope, accordant with the light of nature. Perhaps it is gratifying to our pride, which even in re-

ligion does not always desert us, to see the foundations of our faith, though resting on the sure and holy rock of revelation, established on the basis of reason. To the most interesting truths of scripture, nature then presents us with some striking intimations. She shows us that the resurrection of the body is perfectly analogous to the common course of her operations. If to the deformity and barrenness of winter, succeeds the verdure and beauty of spring; if the crawling, loathsome worm is transformed to the gay and gaudy butterfly; if the feeble, ignorant infant is raised to the mature, the intelligent, the perfect man, may we not hope that after death, we also shall be changed; that our corruptible shall put on incorruption; that our mortal shall be clothed with immortality?

Should it be said that these changes, however important, affect only the system to which we at present belong, and that we cannot argue from what we are *now*, to what we shall be *hereafter;* let it be remembered that we act from such deductions in the most common concerns of life. If in this world we are raised from weakness to strength, from ignorance to knowledge, and even from depravity to virtue, may we not hope, that God, who careth for man, will raise him by his power, in another, from mortality to glory, from human imperfection to angelick purity, from earthly happiness to Heavenly bliss?

It is thus that nature and religion echo each other's voice in teaching us this interesting truth; and what the one has clearly revealed in the book of inspiration, the other has inscribed in legible, though less explicit characters, on the face of her works.

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Decision of character is as important to the consistency, as to the success of life. There are few qualities of the magnanimous kind, which men regard with more respect, or which may be said to carry so much before it as this. We cannot but look with some reverence on the man, who boldly seises the path of duty or action, and notwithstanding perpetual obstacles undauntedly pursues it; even if his pursuits are such, as religion forbids us to approve, yet we are compelled to admire the unyielding perseverance, the ardent boldness, with which he always accomplishes them. It is singular how soon habit and resolution will form this character. A peculiar constitution of body united to strong powers of mind and to favourable circumstances of life, have undoubtedly been possessed by those, who have displayed it in its boldest form—But *poverty* and *desertion* have produced it in many, from whom we might have looked for nothing but weakness and irresolution. The ivy, which has been unable to entwine itself around the trunk of an oak, has been seen to shoot forth its branches as vigorous and strong, as those on which it attempted to rest for support. Unfortunately, those who have been most remarkable for decision of character, have chiefly been on the wrong side of virtue—Their splendid unyielding villainy has served the ruin, while it has extorted the praises of the world. Marius, Cataline, Cortez, and Cromwell, with the long list of daring infernals have, it is to be feared, been always more numerous than the Washingtons.—Had their boldness, their perseverance, and ardour been exerted in the cause of virtue, how glorious would have been their triumphs: and we should not now have cause to lament, that Providence had in judgment sent such scourges into the world, to show us the danger and worthlessness of mere intellectual power, when separated from moral goodness.

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It is not only to a prevailing principle of avarice, it is also to the malignant influence of party spirit, that we are indebted for our humble rank in literature. Wherever party spirit is permitted to engage and alienate the

mind, jealousy is an invariable concomitant. It may be true indeed, " that jealousy in a particular sense, has done more for the preservation of political freedom, than all the rest of the virtues united"—But when this jealousy extends itself to an enmity against science and literature, when it becomes opposed to everything that would exalt itself by genius and learning; when with a sacrilegious hand it would tear the well-earned laurel from the brow of virtue, and hurl it from its just and honourable eminence, it becomes an evil, which every good man is interested to destroy. Let such as embrace these absurd doctrines, or who would so far deviate from common sense as to adopt such a conduct, remember, that the *literary*, and above all the *virtuous* few ought never to be the object of fear or envy. Let them remember, *that the philosophick mind will not be ambitious of honour, which depends on the inconstant breath of publick favour, and that virtue will always with conscious pride reject that power, which virtue does not give.*

For The Port Folio.

Memoirs of Baron de Besenval.

From the German and French.

These memoirs exhibit a sad picture of immorality in France during the reign of Louis XVth, and particularly towards the latter years of it: but they are written in a natural and unaffected style, and will be read with avidity—the Baron is the officer whose life was saved at the solicitation of Mr. Necker, on his return to Paris, when recalled at the united request of all orders; it was almost the last instance of that great minister's credit with the people, nor did it forever save the object of his humane interference from a trial, where he with great difficulty escaped the fury of the popular party.

The Baron de Besenval, was a Swiss by birth, who entered young into the French service. While yet a youth he obtained permission to lead the forlorn hope at the attack of a redoubt, that was situated on an almost inaccessible rock, and was at the head of the remaining few who gained the parapet of the work: the party had been exposed during the whole of the assault to a most murderous fire, and were rather wavering, when the baron, turning with a smile to the men who were scrambling up immediately after him, *Morbleu*—grenadiers, said he, we shall gain some hard knocks, I find, but who would stay here a moment if there was nothing to be gained? The effect of these few words, and the fearless gayety they breathed, inspired his followers with new spirit, and the redoubt was carried. With many distinguished qualities, he was not without his faults, and among them was a certain, short-lived indeed, but outrageous violence of temper on some occasions, and nothing can give a better idea of his character in this respect than the following anecdote:

He had a servant about him, a valet de chambre of the name of Blanchard, who having been in the service of the baron's father, had grown grey in the family, and now remained attached to it rather as a friend than as a domestick. No indulgence was omitted which could soften the infirmities of age to Blanchard, nor any commission required of the good old man, but such as might afford him exercise and amusement. It once happened that the baron, who was a connoisseur in flowers, had pro-

cured a beautiful Cape jessmine; it was in full bloom, and he destined it as a present to the queen. Having removed it into a vase of ornamental China, he placed it carefully on the sunny side of his terrace, giving it in charge to Blanchard, and directing that it should be watered in the evening —but unfortunately the hand of poor Blanchard was unsteady, the watering pot fell from his grasp, the jessamine was crushed, and the vase demolished: at this direful moment who should enter but the baron; transported beyond all bounds at the catastrophe he was witness to, he loaded his poor old servant with invectives, and drove him from his presence. But scarcely was this violent scene over, and the baron left to himself, than he began to reflect on the impropriety he had been guilty of; he would have condescended to any excuses, but Blanchard was gone to bed, and to every inquiry that was made returned for answer that he was indisposed.

After a feverish and sleepless night, the baron had risen earlier than usual, when Blanchard entered his chamber—I am come, Monsieur Le Baron, said he, to ask a favour of you, it is, that you would permit me to retire to my own home, and live with my relations: How, said the baron, with somewhat of his former violence, do you think of quitting me then? No, sir, you shall not quit me; we must die as we have lived together. Ah! Monsieur Le Baron, that cannot be: I every day see, I feel, that I am become odious to you; I am grown too old to be of any use here, and my slowness and awkwardness, can only serve to excite the violence of your temper. You have been the most generous and best of masters; you have made me rich beyond my hopes: I shall be near you; I shall have the happiness of seeing you frequently, but being no longer called upon to fulfil the slightest duty, or execute even the smallest commission—we shall avoid these cruel scenes which cannot but be fatal to the health and to the repose of both of us. I see then, replied the baron, with tears in his eyes, I see that you are determined we shall separate. Be it so then, but observe sir, you were attached to my father, and served him long and faithfully. Your wife was my nurse, and took care of me when an infant: you have been longer in the family than I have, and if one of us must turn out, it must be I. I will go then, nor will I return, till you love me well enough to bear with my infirmities. So saying, he snatched up his hat, and was already hurrying towards the door, when Blanchard threw himself before him, and would have gone upon his knees, had not the baron prevented it; he pressed the good old man in his arms; they promised with mutual tears, to forget what was past, and swore that nothing should ever separate them. N.

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The king of Portugal, grandfather to the present Prince Regent, would certainly in any other rank of life have been considered and treated as a madman. Never were religion and irregularity of life so singularly blended in any individual, and there was in many other respects a humorous originality in his character, which gave rise to some very ludicrous scenes: it was his custom when he went to matins at the Dominican church,

which he did every morning, to carry a stout bludgeon in his hand, and this he was sure to throw at the head of any of the Monks, who were seen to nod: it was the duty of a lay brother upon these occasions, to fetch the bludgeon as a spaniel does a ball, and to restore it to the royal hand. He was fond of conversation and by no means insensible to the charms of wit. Speaking before his courtiers one day of the absolute power of a king, the marquis of Pantelina, a nobleman of the first rank, who was present, ventured to say that there might be some limits to the obedience of a subject, but the king would allow of none—there could be none, he said, and if I ordered you, addressing himself to the marquis, if I ordered you to jump into the sea head foremost, it would be your duty to do so. But where are you going, added he, perceiving that the marquis, without replying, was making towards the door—I am going sire, said the skilful courtier, to learn to swim.

There was no resisting such an answer, and the king with all his gravity of character and seriousness of discussion, was obliged to join in the general laugh.

N.

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Nothing, it is well known, contributed more to that general dissatifaction which prepared the minds of men for the revolution in France, than the deranged state of the publick finances under Louis XV. It is to the vices of that indolent and luxurious monarch, that his posterity may in a great measure attribute the evils which have overwhelmed them. Madame de Pompadour mentions in one of her letters, that a new minister, who plumed himself on being an honest man, had begun his reform of the king's household by an inquiry into the number of pairs of breeches which his majesty might use in a year. I think said, the king, as I am often on horseback, I may possibly use a pair in three or four days—that, sire, said the minister, would amount to but ten or twelve dozen pairs in a year, and here is the bill of your majesty's tailor, in which you are charged nine hundred. The minister then went to the king's daughters, and found upon inquiry, that they were charged fifty sous a pair for their gloves, instead of twenty. He began well, as she observes, but there were greater reforms to make than of breeches and gloves. The Duke de Choisal has told me, says the Baron de Besenval, that the king once asked him what he thought the carriage they were then riding in might cost. I think, sire, says the duke, that such a one might be had for six thousand livres, but it probably cost eight thousand—You are very far indeed from the sum, replied the king, this carriage does not cost me less than thirty thousand.—Some days after when they were alone in the king's cabinet, the duke took occasion to refer to the conversation which had taken place about the price of the carriage, and to press his majesty to consent to some regulations which might put an end to such a system of waste and robbery—I know, replied the king, I know as well as you do, my dear friend, that the abuses in every branch of the publick expenditure, as well as of my household are enormous—but too many persons, and persons of great and powerful connexions are too interested in their continuation to leave a possibility of correcting them. Every new minister has made the attempt to no

purpose, and the Cardinal de Fleury himself, who was all-powerful, and whose habits of life were economical did not venture to carry any part of his plan of reform into execution; take my advice therefore, submit with a good grace to what you cannot prevent, and do not pretend to amend what is incurable. It is singular, that what the most powerful and popular ministers of France, did not venture to undertake, should have been effected by Mr. Necker! By an individual whose birth in a foreign country, whose situation in life, and whose religion might, it should seem, have excluded him from all prospect of ever being placed at the head of the French nation. Never was there a happier instance of the weight of private character, and of the effect which plain good sense, disinterestedness, and a well understood economy, may be of in retrieving the finances of a nation. But it was too late—the political machine of France was already, as Mr. Necker has expressed it, in rapid motion towards destruction, and all his efforts served only to prolong the fatal moment. N.

ECCENTRICK ADVERTISEMENTS.

"A widower aged forty-five, without children or followers, enjoying five thousand francs a year, and a decent house, wishes to marry a young lady between twenty and twenty-four years, of a reputable family, bringing for her portion good morals, a very agreeable person, and a mild character."

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"A young man, without actual fortune, but having a person and education fit to appear in any company, and an amiable character, such as may please any reasonable and sensible woman; of respectable parents, who were formerly very rich, and are still at their ease, but have a numerous family; aspires to hope that he may find, by the means of this journal so fertile in propositions of all kinds, a lady generous enough to seek his acquaintance, choose him as a husband, and share her fortune with him."

—

"A young woman, aged twenty-four, very prudent and laborious, sprung of a decent family, gaining between three and four francs a day by making toys for children, with a portion of fifteen hundred francs, and a handsome *trousseau*,* wishes to unite herself with a decent young man of good conduct, who has a fixed situation, and established house."

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"A girl aged twenty-five, born in the country, and of simple manners, though she has lived in Paris for six months, wishes to find a husband in the working class. She has no fortune, but a very handsome *trousseau*, and some ready money; nor does she wish for a fortune, but health, talents, sobriety, and above all probity; and would prefer a husband occupied in sedentary labour She is singularly handsome, and in the most complete health."

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"A young woman aged seventeen, beautiful, fresh, well educated, rather in a solid manner than in the taste of the present day, but in consequence of the revolution, absolutely without fortune. She would prove a prize to a man of mature age, who would prefer to fortune with a taste for dissipation, pure manners, a charming person, and an inclination for the cares of a household. This young woman belongs to one of the best families formerly eminent in the law."

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"A young lady aged eighteen, fresh and beautiful as a new blown flower, and endowed with all the graces and talents which increase the charms of beauty, but without fortune, in consequence of disasters which have happened to her parents, is offered by them to a man of sensibility who would share with her a decent existence."

—

"A young man of twenty-nine years, of good birth, and belonging to a respectable family, which has procured him a careful education, so that he profits of several agreeable talents which produce a decent subsistence, can only offer them together with his person, which, without vanity, may please a reasonable woman, such as he would desire, who must be amiable, and possess an easy income. Her age is wholly indifferent."

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* The *trousseau* is a packet of female dress, which a bride brings on her marriage.

"A widower aged forty-three, without any incumberance, of a handsome stature, oval face, brown hair and beard, florid complexion, large black eyes announcing the mildness of his character, mouth of a middle size, with white teeth in perfect preservation; born of honourable parents, and having received an education in the liberal studies, of a very easy character, though reserved till he know his company, lively, and not fond of expensive and noisy pleasures, but of those which he finds at a charming country house, where he lives in the neighbourhood of Versailles, and possessing a clear income of three thousand francs, wishes to marry a lady between thirty and thirty-six years of age, of similar inclinations, either unmarried or a widow without children, without natural defects, and preferring, like him, a rural life, with nearly an equal fortune."

—

"A bachelor aged sixty, but as fresh and healthy as possibe at his age, having a character and education which render him still amiable in society, desires to marry a lady between the age of twenty and thirty-five, and of an agreeable person, that is to say, a genteel figure, regular features, beautiful eyes, a pretty mouth, adorned with fair teeth well arranged and very white, in fine, a rosy complexion, and free of all bodily defects. This bachelor will pay no attention to fortune, his own being fully sufficient to procure for a beloved companion all the comforts that a solid education, virtuous soul, and grateful heart can require."

VARIETY.

In the rough blast heaves the billow,
In the light air waves the willow;
Every thing of moving kind
VARIES with the veering wind:
What have I to do with thee,
Dull, unjoyous Constancy?

Sombre tale, and satire witty,
Sprightly glee, and doleful ditty,
Measur'd sighs, and roundelay,
Welcome all! but do not stay.
What have I to do with thee,
Dull, unjoyous Constancy?

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CHARACTERS OF MONTESQUIEU, VOLTAIRE, ROUSSEAU, AND BUFFON.

(*From the Journal de Paris.*)

Four bright lamps are now totally extinguished in France. They were suspended in the Temple of Genius; and from the bosom of this kingdom diffused their extensive light all over the universe. One, after having dissipated the clouds that enveloped the causes of the grandeur and decline of the Roman empire, threw a new and splendid light over the immense volumes of law; with the great Montesquieu that lamp went out. Brilliant and beneficent rays, with due gradations of heat, like the solar ones, issued from the second lamp, which gave new charms to the sciences, and explained them in a clear and seducing manner. The arts found in this effulgent light an amiable and sure guide. History was taught a quick, steady, and lively march; Poetry all the *eclat* and splendour of the celestial mansions whence she springs. Philosophy appeared clad in the soft allurement of the graces, and man felt stronger emotions of humanity. Voltaire's death extinguished this wonderful lamp. A flame, now devouring like those of the tropicks, now soft as the genial rays of blushing morn, now melancholy, tender, and affecting, as the fair beams of the Cynthean goddess, enflamed the enraptured soul with the holy enthusiasm of virtue, and cast over morality the attracting colours of voluptuousness. The country smiled with such bewitching charms, that man longed to partake of rural toils and sports. At the appearance of this powerful flame, soon vanished barbarous prejudice, the origin of bondage and of tyranny. The unnatural shackles that confined children were broken with the chains that enthraled the mind; Heaven, and the august countenance of the Almighty, stood then confessed before astonished man, who became good, humane, and happy, in the charming visions of hope. Rousseau's breath the fostering name abated, but a new star, by Nature formed to spread a wondrous light over all her works, began to shine with a majestick and unparalleled lustre. Its course was marked by pomp, its motion by harmony, its repose by serenity. All eyes, even the weakest, were fond of contemplating it. From its refulgent car it spread over the universe; and as God assembled in the narrow space of the ark all the

works of the creation, so this great luminary reunited on the banks of the Seine, the animals, the vegetables, and the minerals, that are dispersed in the four quarters of the world. All forms, all colours, all riches, and all instincts, were offered to our eyes and our intellectual faculties. All things were developed, all things were ennobled and adorned with splendour, interest, or grace. But a sable funeral veil is spread, alas! over this bright and wonderful star. Nature silently mourns her loss. With Buffon's life ended the fourth lamp, and nothing remains for his surviving admirers, but the sentiment of their loss, and the despair of repairing it.

THE GALLANT GAME COCK.

Extract of a letter from an officer on board his majesty's ship Superb, on her passage from Jamaica :

" Having given you these additional particulars of the action off St. Domingo, I must now beg leave to relate an anecdote of an English game cock. You must know, then, that on the Superb's poop deck was a large wooden fabrick, forming an oblong hollow square, and so constructed that the upper apartments served for marine arms, and the lower for poultry; now it happened, in the very hottest of the battle, whilst we were closely engaged with the three decker (l'Imperiale) that a forty-two pounder double headed shot, broke through this useful compound structure, destroying no less than twenty-seven stand of arms, as it since appeared, and making terrible havock among the feathered race, splinters, bayonets, broken muskets, &c. &c. prevailed in all directions. When, lo! from the midst of this " confusion words confounded," up sprung this gallant cock, till then " unknown to Fame," and perched on the spanker boom, crowing exultingly. Another shot cutting the boom in two close at his feet, now drove him from his post. Indignantly retreating a few paces aft on the broken poop, again he fixed his stand; and thence, ever and anon, was heard his clarion voice to sound amid the " din of war." This appears strange, you will say, and yet it is not altogether singular. A circumstance, nearly similar, I have heard, took place in the Marlborough on the memorable first of June, 1794: I say nearly similar, because in that instance the bold bird was found to be safe; whereas, our little hero was found on examination to have received many severe contusions, and to have lost an eye ere he extricated himself from the melancholy ruins of his fallen house, and the sad wreck of his mangled messmates. Hardly had the battle ceased when some of the brave men whose dangers he had shared, introduced him to our notice, with an earnest request to save him from the dire hand of our poulterer. Soon we saw him caressed by all, and decorated with rings and ribbons. Never is he to die the death so common to his kind—and this he seems to know; for so perfectly tame is he become that he will perch and crow on one's arm, feed from the hand, and even admit, without fear, of being fondled like the gentlest lapdog. So much for our favourite bold Chanticleer."

London paper.

MERRIMENT.

When Mr. S—— was studying the law in the Temple, his circumstances were (like Miles's Boy's) not the best in the world, he often translated and scribbled for the booksellers—to support a gentleman-like appearance; but like Charles Surface, *justice could not keep pace with his generosity*, and he was consequently exposed to the insult, and pressure of many creditors.—Among the rest appeared a very devil, who watched his motions in such a manner, that our good hearted debtor was obliged to keep his room. As he had many companions to whom he would not refuse admittance, he had a square hole cut in the door, with a slider, and opposite to it he placed a looking-glass in such a situation, that on his servant's removing the slider, he could see who called on him, and give his directions accordingly. A gentleman asked our oratour, what was his reason for placing the glass in that situation? He archly replied, That, sir, is my *dun*-ometer.

The following lines, of a date as far back as the Marquis of ROCKINGHAM's administration, deserve, perhaps, a better fate than oblivion.

To the Commons declare, if you can without shocking 'em,
That they're all fast asleep—and the Minister's *Rocking 'em.*

ORIGINAL POETRY.

For The Port Folio.

The following is an imitation of some verses to Melancholy, by the celebrated Count de Segur, authour of the Life of Frederick, &c. The Annual Review of A. Aiken, speaks of the original in a very complimentary manner. If you approve of the English verses, you will oblige the writer by inserting them in your Miscellany.

Oh, Melancholy, Love's sweet balm,
What bliss thy langnor does impart;
How I enjoy thy pensive calm,
When far from her who fills my heart.
Unhappy he, who never knows,
The charms of tender, softest grief;
What joy love's silent tear bestows,
What luxury in such relief.

To tenderness art thou allied,
Daughter of love, be ever near,
In sweetest sadness by my side,
And I will greet thee with a tear.
Oh! come, and with bright fancy's aid,
Recall the joys which now remain,
The features of my cherish'd maid;
Regrets are mine, and ceaseless pain.

When morning blushes in the east,
My sorrows constant wilt thou see;
Come, when the orb of day's at rest,
And still my tears shall witness thee.
To ease my pangs, and give relief,
Oh! come, receive my bursting sighs;
Absent from her, they charm my grief,
All other pleasure from me flies.

When first my passion Sylvia blest,
Thy pensive form the nymph betray'd;
Robed in thy garb, love stood confess'd,
And told me more than smiles had said.
Tortur'd with doubts, distrust and fears,
I ne'er believ'd she lov'd again,
Till tender sadness fed with tears,
Told, that we felt a mutual pain.

The murmuring of the pebbly tide,
The silence of the forest shade,
The verdant turf, in flow'ring pride,
The feather'd musick of the glade,
A thousand pleasures give with thee,
Of faded joys rememb'rance knows.
For bliss recall'd must pleasure be,
And from the mem'ry pleasure flows.

Then come, thou soft and tender pow'r,
O, often come and be my guest,
The tears you cause to flow each hour,
Give sweet sensations to the breast;
Say can the lover without fears
Enjoy the bliss which love bestows,
And what the wish'd return endears,
When the fond swain no absence knows?

The charming langnor sooths my heart,
And adds a bliss before unknown;
Thy tears consoling joys impart,
Congenial to my grief alone,
May lovers bow before thy shrine,
And thou propitious ever be,
Whether a favour'd one is thine,
Or wretched, offers vows to thee.

CHOICE OF A WIFE.

I ask not Beauty—'Tis a gleam
That tints the morning sky;
I ask not Learning—'Tis a stream
That glides unheeded by.

I ask not Wit—It is a flash
That oft blinds Reason's eye;
I ask not gold—'Tis glittering trash,
That causes many a sigh.

I ask good sense, a taste refin'd,
Candour with prudence blended;
A feeling heart, a virtuous mind,
With Charity attended. OPQ.

NUPTIAL.

Married in Boston on Tuesday morning, at Trinity Church by the Rev. J. S. J. Gardiner, ANDREW DEXTER, jun. esq. of this town, to Miss CHARLOTTE MORTON, daughter of the Hon. Perez Morton, of Dorchester.

The price of The Port Folio is Six Dollars per annum, to be paid in advance.

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